لا إله إلا الله محمد رسول الله

إن الدين عند الله الإسلام

THE
REVIEW
OF RELIGIONS

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WAFA 1360—JULY 1981

EDITOR
M. G. AHMAD

The Ahmadiyya Movement

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Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, was born in 1835 in Qadian, a village in India. In the eighties of the 19th century, he was called to the office of World Reformer to combat the false Religious Philosophies and to explode the Christian theory of redemption based on the fiction of Christ's death on the Cross and to tell the Christians and Muslims to call off their hope for a second visit from Christ as he had been gathered to his fore-fathers and barred like all mortals from coming back to the world.

He initiated the Ahmadiyya Movement, to revive faith in God, challenging rival churches to a spiritual contest to seek Divine sanction for the religion He favoured, through prayer and appeal to Him for guidance and arbitration in the matter by means of His signs, to expound and disseminate spiritual beauties and moral excellences of the teachings of the Holy Quran, to wean men from war-like tendencies and to educate world opinion in favour of renunciation of war as a means of settling disputes, to infuse hope, faith and courage in the drooping hearts of the depressed races and nations of the world, to warn the exploiters, slave-drivers and pedlars in sin against the evil consequences of their evil ways, to collect under one banner all the true lovers of peace and to inculcate among them the spirit of tolerance, good-will and selfless fellow-service and a feeling of true brother-hood.

He passed away in 1908 and was succeeded by his foremost votary and closest companion, Hazrat Hafiz Haji Hakim Maulvi Noor-ud-Din. After his death in 1914, Hazrat Haji Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, was chosen as Head of the Movement. During his 52-year long leadership, he organized a world-girdling chain of mosques and missions. On his death on November 8, 1965 the electoral college named with one accord, Sahibzada Hafiz Mirza Nasir Ahmad as Head of The Ahmadiyya Movement.

For further information about the Movement, its activities, aims, objectives and literature, enquiries may be addressed to the nearest Ahmadiyya Mission or direct to :

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This is an organ of the Ahmadiyya Movement. It deals with religious, ethical, social and economic questions. It also provides Book Reviews.

It is open to all for discussing problems vital to the religious and spiritual welfare of man, but it does not give any assurance to publish all articles received by the Editor, nor does it accept responsibility for views expressed by contributors.

EDITOR
M. G. AHMAD

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نحمدہ ونصلی علی رسولہ الکریم

The Review of Religions

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The Holy Quran

We, the followers of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, believe that the Holy Quran is the Last Message, and the Last Law of God for man. We believe that no part of this Holy Book is abrogated. It is immune to all abrogation. We maintain that whatever the Holy Quran teaches is capable of being practised. It is our firm belief that no Quranic verse contradicts any other verse and therefore no verse stands in need of abrogation. Those who attribute contradiction or inconsistency to it are ignorant. Their objection is due to their own lack of knowledge and understanding. We maintain that the Holy Quran has not altered one little bit since it was revealed. Every word, every letter, remains as it was first revealed. We also believe that not only it has not suffered any alteration, it is incapable of any such change or alteration.

We do not subscribe to the belief that the words of the Holy Quran are not divine. We believe that the words, the vowels and vowel points of the Holy Book are all divine, and that the Holy Prophet of Islam, peace be on him, was a messenger,

a comunicator of the word of God and not the author.

We reject the idea that word of God is untraslatable. How could the teachings of the Holy Book, the knowledge and the guidance contained in it be communicated to those who do know Arabic?

It is our firm belief that the Holy Quran contains all that is necessary for man's spiritual advancement, that it contains the reality that leads to God.

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All this we believe, because we are taught by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad to believe so. We have learned the truth about the Holy Quran from him. Indeed but for him, we would have accepted many a fable about the Holy word of Allah. But for him, we would also have subscribed to the strange and unreasonable notion that the contents of the Holy Quran disappeared after the demise of the Holy Prophet of Islam, peace and blessings of Allah be on him. We would have believed as others believe that as many as six hundred verses of the Holy Quran stand abrogated by subsequently revealed verses and that the aborgated and abrogating verses were all part of the Holy Book.

Without his guidance, we would never have translated the Holy Book in other languages. And thus would have deprived millions of people who have benefited from the Urdu, English, Danish, Swahili, Dutch, German, Gurmukhi, Hindi, Euroba, Logandi and other translations and commentaries, published and distributed by the Ahmadiyya Community throughout the world.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, by the grace of God Almighty, removed these misconceptions about the Holy Word of Allah and generated in our hearts sentiments of deep love and affection and a sense of honour and reverence for the Holy Quran. So that we are able to proclaim with him in all sincerity:

> "My heart yearns every moment to kiss the book and to perform a *tawwaf* around the Holy Quran, for it

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is my Kaaba."

Let us, who count ourselves among his disciples, devote ourselves to the study of Holy Quran. Let us follow the straight path and the perfect guide of our spiritual welfare and our intellectual progress which is the Holy Quran. It contains the water of life necessary for us and comprises the rare and priceless realities not found anywhere else. With it we will be able to distinguish between truth and falsehood and by its guidance we will be able to tread the path of truth and righteousness—the path that leads man to his Creator.

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NOTES & COMMENTS

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement breathed his last on 26th May, 1908 at Lahore.

According to the will of the Founder of the Movement that he should be succeeded by divinely guided personalities as the second manifestation, Hazrat Maulana Nuruddin was elected as his Successor on 27th May, 1908 at Qadian The secretary of the Saddar Anjuman Ahmadiyya published the following note in the *Badr* of June 2nd 1908, under the signature of a large number of men :

> "In accordance with the commands of the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement contained in the book 'Alwasiyyat', we Ahmadies whose signatures are appended below, with perfect sincerity of heart, agree that all the present members of the Ahmadiyya Jamaat, as well as those who, in future, may seek admission into it, should, in the name of Ahmad, pledge their "Baiat" on the hand of Hazrat Haji Hakim Nur-ur-Din Sahib, the first of the Muhajireen, the most eminent amongst us in learning and piety, and the loyalest and oldest companion of our Imam, one whose example was held before us, as in the couplet : 'How well it had been if every one of the Community had been a Nur-ud-Din. So would it have been, indeed, had every heart been filled with *Nur** of certainty." The Commands of Hazrat Maulvi Sahib, in future, should be for us as the commands of Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement".

This announcement was followed by another in the same issue of the paper, immediately after Baiat had taken place at Qadian. It reads :

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* *Nur* means light.

"Before the Funeral prayer ot the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement held at Qadian, and in accordance with the instructions contained in the book Alwassiyat, Hakim Nur-ud-din was proclaimed his Successor, and the oath of Baiat taken at his hand. This announcement is being addressed as information to all members of the Movement ; so that, on reading it, they should all, in person or through letters, present themselves at once to Hazrat Hakim-ul-Ummat and take the Baiat at his hand".

Evidently, the first 'Ijma' of the Community was on the establishment of Second Manifestation, Hazrat Maulvi Nur-ud-Din Sahib was accepted by all members of the Community, without any exception whatsoever as the divinely-guided Successor of Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement and as the first person of the second manifestation. There was not a single voice raised against it.

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The present head of the Movement is Hazrat Mirza Nasir Ahmad Sahib who is among those illustrious and noble personalities in whom the promise of the second manifestation has been fulfilled. May Allah grant him a long and prosperous life.

Writing in the weekly 'Times' of March 23, 1981, its correspondent from Jerusalem reports of a find in Gaza that sheds new light on the riddle of Exodus. He says :

"The bibilical account of the Exodus does not answer a tantalizing question. Why did Moses turn right when he reached the Sinai, taking his flock on an arid, roundabout 40 year odyssey, instead of treading directly along the Mediterrnean coast to the Promised Land ? The Old Testament hints that Moses headed inland to avoid a confrontation with the Phillistines. Yet archaeological findings have long indicated that at the time of the Exodus.....the Philistines had not yet established themselves in the coastal region around Gaza. Now after nearly ten years of digging in the Gaza strip, Archaeologist Trude Dothan, 57, of Jerusalem's Hebrew

> University has found indications that the Israelites went into the dessert to elude not the Phillistines but the very people from whom they were escaping...Egyptians. The evidence ; the remains of a large Egyptian Community just south of Gaza that flourished during the reign of Moses putative foe, the Pharaoh Ramses II."

The Israelites had settled in Egypt during the days of Prophet Joseph and the Pharoah of Joseph's time and his descendants had been very kind to them. The Israelites, who had mostly settled in the territory of Goshen granted to them by the Pharoahs, had prospered and acquired wealth and influence. They were intelligent, hard working and resourceful as compared to the Egyptians, and in a short time they had left them far behind. In the financial and economic field, particularly, they had gained a position of controlling the finances of the nation as is apparent from the fact that Karun, the financial wizard and Minister of Finance of Rameses 11 was also an Israeli. The Egyptians envied their status and set about to destory it. Thus we read in the Holy Quran :

> 'The people of Pharaoh, who afflicted you with grievous torment, slaying your sons and sparing your women'. (2 : 50)

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In the Book of Exodus we read :

> "Now there arose a new king over Egypt which knew not Joseph. And he said unto his people, Behold the people of Children of Israel are more and mightier than we : Come on, let us deal wisely with them ; lest they multiply...Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them (the Israelites) with their burdens. And they built for Pharaohs treasure cities, Pithom and Rameses. But the more they afflicted them the more they multiplied and grew. And they were grieved because of the Children of Israel. And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour ; and they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mor-

tar and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigour. And the king of Egypt spake to the Hebrew mindwife ...when you do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, and see them upon the stools, if it be a son, then ye shall kill him: but if it be a daughter, then she shall live.....And Pharaoh charged all his people saying, every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye save alive." (1: 8- 22)

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Under these circumstances and because of the hostile attitude of the Egyptians, the Israelites, under the leadership of Moses, left the territory of Goshen to return to the land of their fathers. On their way to the Promised Land they were pursued by Pharaoah's army. When the Israelites reached the arm of the Red Sea which lay across their route, they espied the pursuing hosts with Pharoah at their head. They were very much frightened and expressed their fears to Moses. God came to their rescue and they were saved miraculously while Pharaoh and his army were drowned in the sea. It appears that the Israelites reached the sea at the time of the ebb-tide as the sea was about to recede. And therefore when Moses struck the sea with his rod as the Quran says, or stretched out his hand over the sea as the Bible says, the sea receded leaving the bed dry. The Israelites under God's commands, crossed over to the opposite bank. Pharaoh and his army came in their pursuit and in their haste to overtake the Israelites marched onto the sea bed. Being heavily equipped with big chariots and other heavy armaments, their progress was greatly hampered and while they were yet in the midst of crossing the sea the high tide returned and they were all drowned.

'Times' correspondent has rightly pointed out that the bibilical account of the journey of Israelites from Egypt to Cannan, does not explain as to why Moses, on reaching Sinai, instead of taking direct route along the coast of Mediterranean Sea, turned right and followed a very long, roundabout route

resulting in their 40 year wanderings in the wilderness. The writers of Exodus have certainly not mentioned the reason of this detour. Perhaps it was an omission by mistake. Or may be it was deliberately not mentioned because it showed the ungrateful, cowardly and insolent way in which the people of Israel behaved.

But the Holy Quran, which gives the true and authentic stories of earlier nations does mention the reason. In sura Maida it is said that when after the Israelites were saved from the clutches of Pharaoh and his people, Moses commanded them to take the direct route and "enter the Holy Land which Allah has ordained for them", they refused to enter the land because of the presence of "a haughty and powerful people" there. They said that if and when these people leave the land only then they will enter it They further showed their ungrateful and cowardly nature by saying:

"go, thou and thy Lord, and fight, while we sit here". (5 : 25)

This ungratefulness and insolence of Israelites earned them God's wrath Who condemned them to a 40 year odyssey in the wilderness.

The incident as narrated in the Holy Quran provides the answer to the 'tantalizing question' on which the biblical account of Exodus throws no light.

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The only thing that needs explanation is the identity of the nation whom the Israelites were afraid to face? Who were these people and why were the Israelites afraid of facing them in the battlefield? Were they Philistines as the Old Testament hints? Perhaps not, because as the 'Times' correspondent says: "Archaeological findings have long indicated that at the time of the Exodus.....the Philistines had not yet established themselves in the coastal region around Gaza". More probably, as the recent archaeological findings suggest, they were Egyptians, settled in these parts. Certainly the manner in which the Israelities avoided a fight against them suggests a people of

whom they were terribly afraid. And it stands to reason that the Israelities, who had been for a long time kept in bondage by the Egyptians, were averse to face ihem in a fight.

Bishop Pike of America was interviewed sometimes ago by a correspondent of an American magazine "Look". The Bishop said :

> "The Trinity—the concept of God as Father ; Son and Holy Ghost is misleading. Whatever one can affirm of the Trinitv, one can affirm of God. The things we say of the Holy Ghost in our creed, the old Testament says ; "Thus spake the Lord God". One does not want to loose sight of the prophetic in speaking of the Lord God".

Bishop Pike argues that the Trinity, set forth by Greek-influenced Christians of the fourth century became confused with Polytheism. He quips : "The Muslims offer one God and three wives ; we offer three Gods and one wife. No wonder Christianity is losing in Africa".

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40,000 Alcholics in Devon and Cornwall (England)

"One in 20 of the working population of Devon and Cornwall has a drinking problem", a report by the West County Council on Alcoholism says.

In this report it is further mentioned that in these two counties there are 40,000 alcholics. These sufferers frequently stay away from work on Mondays, costing thousands of pounds each year in lost productivity. Apart from the loss of income alcoholism is a dangerous disease. Thousands of people die because of it. Many more lead a useless and miserable life being alcoholics.

This is beyond our comprehension that drug addiction should be condemned by a society whereas alcoholism should be permitted to develop which is as dangerous as drug-taking if not more. This hypocracy has created a revolt among the

younger generation of today. They ask the genuine question as to why the drinking of alcohol be not treated at par with the drug addiction by the society. Surely the harm and injury to health resulting from both is of equal degree.

What is needed today is to reform the alcoholics and the drug-addicts and the total ban of all intoxicants of any nature.

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We live in an era in which peace whether of individual or of nations had been totally lost. There is a growing number of people whose mental balance is at stake.

The continuous use of drugs and sleeping pills speak of their disturbed mind. The figure of deterioration of family life; divorces; separations; broken homes; delinquent children; vandalism, crimes of all sorts committed all over the world are on the increase each day which all point to the negation of mental harmony. At the level of nations their political life and thought is hastily drifting the world into another reckless struggle of utter disaster and ruin. With some, might has still the upper hand. The powerful loose no opportunity to oppress the weak. The U.N.O. is day by day becoming impotent, powerless and speechless.

But what is the solution for all this? True peace of mind could only be found by establishing a living communion with God and by seeking His guidance. Islam alone offers the great remedy for this. In its teachings we have inherited the abundance of spiritual food, which when distributed to the rest of mankind will usher the era of peace and tranquillity. The examplary life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad can bring about a great transformation in our lives, if we faithfully try to follow it. If within the shortest possible time he could bring about a revolutionary change in the lives of those who had all the immoral tendencies and could make them saints than surely transformation could easily be brought about in our lives if we followed his noble example.

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A Few Verses from the Holy Quran

يا ايها الذين آمنوا كتب عليكم الصيام كما كتب على الذين
من قبلكم لعلكم تتقون

"O ye who believe, fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may safeguard yourselves against moral and spiritual ills."
(2 : 184)

Prescribed means fasting during the month of Ramadhan, which is obligatory.

(Al-Hakam, Vol. VI, No. 7, 24 February 1907, p. 14)

How should the period of the fast be determined in regions where the day and night extend over six months? The basic determinant is a person's capacity. For instance, what is the period of pregnancy in those regions? Is it in accord with a day and night of twenty-four hours or a day and night extending ever a year? If the former then the period of the fast should also be determined accordingly, that is to say, fifteen or sixteen hours. If a pregnacy in those regions extends over two hundred and sixty years, the period of the fast will be seven or eight months, for it be presumed that the faculties and capacities of the people of these regions re-adjusted to their basic unit of time. (Jang Muqaddas, 5 June, 1893)

The third pillar of Islam is fasting. People are not aware of the significance of fasting also. A person cannot describe the conditions of a region he has not visited and is not familiar with. Fasting is not merely abstinence from food and drink; it has an effect which can be known only by experience. The less a pereon eats the purer is his soul and the sharper is his spiritual vision. By fasting Allah designs the diminution of one form of nourishment and the increase of another. A person who fasts should remember that he has not merely to

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abstain from food and drink, he should occupy himself with the rememberance of Allah so that he should cut asunder from the mudane and material and switch on to the spiritual. The object of the fast is that one should abstain from food that provides physical nourishment and should have recourse to food which is the source of satisfaction and nourishment of the soul. Those who fast for the purpose of winning the pleasure of Allah and not merely for the sake of form, should occupy themselves during the fast with the praise and glorification of Allah so that they may be furnished with spiritual nourishment. (Al-Hakam, Vol. XI, No 2, 19 January 1907, p. 9)

Fasting and prayer are both forms of worship. The emphasis in fasting is on the body, and the emphasis in Prayer is on the spirit. Prayer induces melting of the soul and thus ranks higher than fasting which promotes the capacity for visions, but this last can sometimes be achieved by Hindu *Sadhus* also. The spiritual ferment stimulated by Prayer cannot be achieved through any other means.

(Al-Badar, Vol. 1, No. 10, 8 June 1905, p. 2)

A person who is fasting may look into a mirror, use oil for his hair, use perfume. It is not desirable that he should apply antimony to his eyes during the fast; he can do so at night. (Al-Badr, Vol. VI, No. 2, 7 February 1907, p. 4)

If a person who is fasting eats or drinks in complete forgetfulness of the fast, his fast is not thereby vitiated.

(Al-Hakam, Vol. XI, No. 7, 24 February 1907, p. 14)

It is not obligatory to fast on the anniversary of the Holy Prophet's death, nor during the first ten days of the month of Muharram.

(Al-Badar Vol. VI, No. 11, 14 March 1907, p. 5)

A person ate some breakfast at a time when he believed the time of the fast had not yet commenced and then continued the fast. He discovered later that at the time of his eating the time of the fast had already commenced. He was told his *bona fide* mistake did

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not vitiate his fast.

(Al-Badar, Vol. VI, No 7, 14 February 1907, p. 8)

ايامًا معدودات فمن كان منكم مريضا او على سفر فعدة من ايام اخر و على الذين يطيقونه فدية طعام مسكين فمن تطوع خيرا فهو خيرله و ان تصوموا خيرلكم ان كنتم تعلمون.

"During a fixed number of days. But whose from among you should be ailing, not being permanently incapacitated, or should be on a journey, shall complete the reckoning by fasting on a corresponding number of other days; and for those who find fasting a strain hard to bear is an expiation, the feeding of a poor person, if they can afford it. Whoso carries through a good work with eager obedience, it is the better for him. If you had knowledge you would realise that it is better for you that you should fast." (2 : 185)

The expression "from among you" occurs in the Quran more than eighty times. Except in two or three places where the context indicates the contrary, in all other occasions it comprehends all Muslims in all ages till the end of the world. The injunction: Whoso from among you should be ailing, or should be on a journey, shall complete the reckoning by fasting on a corresponding number of other days; was not confined to the Companions of the Holy Prophet. It comprehends all Muslims till the end of time.

(Shahadatul Quran 2nd Edition, p. 35)

Fasting is prescribed for you but whoso from among you should be ailing or should be on a journey should fast on a corresponding number of other days.

(Shahadatul Quran, 2nd Edition, p. 38)

In my own case I am loath to miss a fast and give up one only in an extremity. These are blessed days and are the

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season of the descent of divine grace and mercy.

(Al-Hakam, Vol. V. No. 3, 24 January 1901, p. 5)

That a person who is ill or is on a journey should not observe the fast during Ramadhan, is an injunction, and not merely a choice to observe the fast or not. In my view a person who is travelling should not observe the fast. If he does because most people are fasting, he should nevertheless complete the reckoning by fasting on a corresponding number of other days. He who observes the fast by going out of the way, when he is travelling seeks to win the pleasure of Allah by imposing his own will upon Him, rather than by complying with His direction. This is an error. True faith demands obedience to commandments and to prohibitions,

(Al-Hakam, Vol. III, No. 4, 31 Janauary 1899, p. 7)

My attitude is that a person should not impose hardships upon himself. That which is commonly considered a journey should be treated as such for purposes of canonical interpretation even if it does not extend beyond a few miles. Sometimes I go for a walk with my friends for two or three miles, but no one imagines that we are on a journey. But when a person sets out with his bundle with the purpose of starting on a journey, he is travelling. The law is not designed to create difficulties. That which is commonly considered a journey should be treated as such. Concessions should be availed of just as commandments are obeyed. Commandments are imposed by God, concessions are also decreed by God.

(Al-Hakam, Vol. 5, No. 6, 17 February 1901, p. 13)

To avail of the concessions granted by the Holy Quran is also part of righteousness. God, the Exalted, has granted the traveller and the ailing one permission to observe the fast at other times. This should also be compiled with. Most of the great personalities of the faith have opinion that it is disobedience to observe the fast during a journey or illness, for the object of all worship is to win the pleasure of Allah and not to do one's own will, and the pleasure of Allah is won

through conformity to whatever direction He gives, without putting any gloss on it. It is He Who has directed: Whoso from among you should be ailing or should be on a journey, shall complete the reckoning by fasting on a corresponding number of other days. There is here no further specification of the type of journey or of illness. I do not observe the fast during a journey or illness. For instance, I am indisposed today and am not observing the fast.

(Al-Hakam Vol. XI, No. 4, 31 January 1907, p. 14)

The direction is that if one is ailing, or is on a journey, short or long one, should make up the number of days by fasting on an equal number of other days. Allah, the Most High, has not defined a journey, nor has the Holy Prophet. Whatever is commonly considered a journey is what is meant. Less than a stage would not be a journey.

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(Maktoobat, Vol. V, No. 5, p. 81)

He who observes the fast during Ramadhan while he is ill or is on a journey disobeys an express divine direction. Allah, the Exalted, has clearly said that a sick person or one who is on a journey should not fast and should make up the number by fasting on other days. This direction should be complied with. Salvation is through grace, not through one's prowess in deeds. God has not specified whether the illness should be slight or severe, or the journey should be short or long. The direction is general and should be obeyed. Those who contravene it would be guilty of disobedience.

(Al-Badar, Vol. VI, No. 42, 17 October, 1907, p. 7)

Deeds will be appraised according to motives. Sometimes the moth of Ramadhan falls in a part of the year when cultivators who have to work in the fields, or these who have to earn their livelihood through hard labour are not able to sustain the fast. Each individual should judge the matter in a spirit of purity and righteousness. Those who can endure the fast should observe it; those who cannot are like these who are ailing, they should make up the number on other days.

(Al-Badar, Vol. VI, No. 39, 26 September 1907, p. 7)

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The expiation in the case of those incapacitated is for the purpose of seeking a restoration of the capacity to observe the fast, which God alone has the power to bestow. One should supplicate God alone for everything. God is All-Powerfull. He can bestow upon one suffering from tuberoulosis the strength to observe the fast, if He so wills. The object of the expiation is to obtain the necessary s rength and this can be achieved only through divine grace. I consider, therefore, that it would be well for such a person to supplicate in some such terms as: Lord, this is one of thy blessed months, and I am incapacitated from seeking its blessings. I know not whether I can make up for my defaults by fasting on other days or whether I shall survive till next year. Do thou of Thy grace bestow upon me the strength to observe the fast If he does that with a humble and yearning heart, I feel sure he would be granted the needed strength.

All limitations imposed by God are for our good. When a person supplicates his Creator not to deprive him of the blessings of this month and his supplication is inspired by utter humility and sincerity, God safeguards him against such privation. If such a one should fall ill during Ramadhan, his illness becomes a source of blessing for all depends upon the motive. A believer should prove himself valiant in the cause of Allah. A person who is not able to fast but whose heart yearns that he should have been well enough to fast will not be deprived of the blessing for, if he is not a malignerer, God's angels will fast on his behalf. If a person finds the fast hard to endure because of his own softness, and he imagines that he is indisposed and fancies that his state of health does not permit of his missing a meal, that he would expose himself to this and that hazard if he fasts, will not acquire any spiriritual merit because his fancy adjudges divine blessing to be a hardship. But he who is happy in his heart at the advent of Ramadhan and is looking forward to observing the fast, but is then unable to fast because of illness is not deprived in heaven of the

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blessing of the fast. There are many who merely seek excuses. They imagine that as they can deceive the worldly, they can also deceive God. They fashion their own doctrines and imagine their fallacies are truth, but in the sight of Allah they are false. Their self-contrived exemptions are of no avail. God knows the motive and intent of one who carries out everything with perfect sincerity. He is aware of the yearning of his heart and appreciates it and bestows upon him beyond his deserts. Those who seek excuses rely on interpretations, but such reliance is of no avail in the sight of God.

When I continued voluntary fasts over a period of six months I met a number of Prophets in a vision who admonished me over inflicting such hardship on myself and urged me to desist. Thus if a person endures hardship for the sake of winning God's pleasure, He takes pity on him like his parents and commands him to desist.

(Al-Badar, Vol. 1 No. 7, 12 December 1902, pp. 52-53)

A person who may have neglected the observance of the fast should make expiation according to his capacity and should make a firm determination never to miss the fast again.

(Al-Badar, Vol. 1, No. 12, 16 January 1903, pp. 91-98)

(See Al-Badar, Vol. VI, No. 39, 26 September 1907, p. 7)

Expiation means feeding one poor person.

(Al-Badar, Vol. VI, No. 42, 17 October 1907, p 7)

Expiation by itself is permissible only in the case of those who are permanently incapacitated by illness, old age, etc. It is not permissible in the case of those whose incapacity is temporary and who are able to fast after its cessation. A religion that does not call for effort is not of much use. To evade in such manner the obligations imposed by God is sinful. Allah the Exalted, has said He would guide only those who strive after Him.

God, the Most High, has appointed five kinds of effort

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in Islam : Salat, fasting, Zakat (Charity), Pilgrimage and repelling the enemies of Islam by the sword or by the pen. These are prescribed in the Holy Quran and the Muslims should carry them out. The obligatory fast extends only over a month in one year. Some of those devoted to God observe voluntary fasts frequently and put forth great effort in respect of them. Perpetual observance of fast is, however not permissible. There should be intervals between periods of voluntary fasting.

(Al-Badar, Vol. VI, No. 43, 2 October, 1907, p. 3)

Feeding a poor person by way of expiation may be done locally or by remitting the money therefore to a fund established for such a purpose.

(Al-Badar, Vol. VI, No. 6, 7 February 1907, p. 4)

Man should strive his utmost to carry out his obligations to God. Concerning the fast God has said : It is better for you that you should fast.

(Al-Badar, Vol. 1, No. 7, 12 December 1902, p 52)

شهر رمضان الذى انزل فيه القرآن هدى للناس و بينات من الهدى و الفرقان - فمن شهد منكم الشهر فليصمه - و من كان مريضاً او على سفر فعدة من ايام اخر - يريد الله بكم اليسر ولا يريد بكم العسر- ولتكملوا العدة و لتكبرو الله على ما هداكم و لعلكم تشكرون -

The month of *Ramadhan* is the month in which the Quran began to be revealed, the Book which comprises guidance for mankind and clear proofs of guidance and divine Signs which discriminate between truth and falsehood. Therefore, he who witnesses this month, being stationary and in health should fast through it. But whoso is ailing, not being permanently incapacitated, or is on a journey, should complete the reckoning by fasting on a corresponding number of other days. Allah desires ease for you and desires not hardship for you ; He has granted you this facility so that you should encounter no hardship in completing the reckoning and that you may exalt Allah

for His having guided you and that you may be grateful to Him. (2 : 186)

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Ramdh means the heat of the sun. As one who fasts abstains from food, drink and all material pleasure and develops an eagerness and warmth for carrying out divine commandments, this combination of spiritual and physical warmth gave the month its name. The lexicographists are in my view, not right in ascribing the origin of the name to the fact that the name was applied to the month at a time when it fell in the summer. In Arabia most of the time it is hot. Spiritual *Ramdh* means spiritual eagerness and religious warmth. *Ramdh* also connotes that degree of heat whereby stones and rocks become hot. (Al-Hakam, Vol. V, No. 27, 24 July 1901, p. 2)

The month of Ramadhan is the month in which the Quran was revealed. This marks the high rank of the month. The mystics have opined that this is a good month for the illumination of the heart ; visions are frequently vouchsafed in this moth. Salat purifies the soul, and the fast illumines the heart. Purification of the soul means turning away from the desires of the flesh ; and illumination of the heart means that the door of visions may be opened so that God may become visible. This is the significance of the Quran having been revealed in this month. Undoubtedly, the observance of the fast is richly rewarded, but illness and selfish desires often deprivve people of this great bounty.

In my younger days....I observed fast over a period of six months. During this period I was vouchsafed a vision in which I saw numerous columns of light rising heavenwards. I am not sure whether these columns rose from the earth or issued from my heart. I carried out this spiritual excercise in my youth. At that time I could have continued my fast for four years, had I so wished.

The commandments of God, the Exalted, are of two types ; one, financial service : and two physical srevice. The first is possible only for those who possess means ; those who do not are excused. Physical service one can perform well only in one's

younger years. After sixty years one becomes a prey to many afflictions. Cataract weakens the eyesight. Someone has rightly said : Old age brings a hundred ills. Whatever good one can achieve in one's younger days continue to yeild its beneficence in old age. He who has achieved nothing in his youth has to endure many ills in his old age. A white hair brings a message from death. (Al-Badar, Vol. 1, No. 7, 12 December 1902, p. 52).

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The word Quran is a grand prophecy : namely that this is the only Book worth reading. The more books are produced the greater will be its worthiness for being read. At such time this will be the only book to which recourse could be had for the purpose of guarding the honour of Islam and stamping out falsehood, and all other books would deserve to be discarded. The word Furqan also has the same meaning, namely, that this will be the only Book discriminating between truth and falsehood ; and no other book, whether a compilation of *hadith* or other, would have the same standing. Therefore, leave aside all other books and concentrate on the Quran day and night. Utterly without faith is the person who pays no heed to the Quran and keeps poring over other books all the time. The members of our Movement should occupy themselves wholly with the study of and reflection over the Quran and should lay aside their preoccupation with the *hadith*. It is a matter of sorrow that not that much attention is devoted to the Quran and its study as is devoted to the *hadith* and its study. Make the Quran your instrument and victory is yours. No darkness can withstand this light. This is the only instrument that is needful today and will be needful always, and the same was in the hands of the Holy Prophet and his companions in the early days of Islam. Blessed and a million times blessed is the people who had no hesitation in accepting this unique book and pronouncing it as the fountainhead of its faith, and welcomed this Furqan and this Light with joy and acclamation. (Al-Hakam, Vol. IV, No. 37, 17 October 1900, p. 5)

The Quran has three qualities. 1. It guides towards those truths and religious lores which had been forgotten. 2. It expounds in detail that which had been left concise. 3. Where differences had arisen, it discriminates between truth and falsehood and establishes the decisive criterion. (Baraheen Ahmadiyya, Part III, p. 205, footnote 11).

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Thus said the Holy Prophet

عن سلمان الفارسی قال خطبنا رسول الله صلعم فی آخر یوم من شعبان فقال یا ایها الناس قداظلکم شهر عظیم شهر مبارک شهر فیه لیلة خیر من الف شهر جعل الله صیامه فریضة و قیام لیله تطوعا من تقرب فیه بخصله من الخیر کان کمن ادی فریضة فیما سواه و من ادی فریضة فیه کان کمن ادی سبعین فریضة فیما سواه وهو شهر الصبر و الصبر ثوابه الجنة و شهر المواساة و شهر یزاد فیه رزق المؤمن من فطر فیه صائما کان له مغفرة لذنوبه و عتق رقبته من النار و کان له مثل اجره من غیر ان ینتقص من اجره شیئی . قلنا یا رسول الله لیس کلنا نجد ما نفطر به الصائم فقال رسول الله صلعم یعطی الله هذا الثواب من فطر صائما علی مذقة لبن او تمرة او شربة من ماء و من اشبع صائما سقاه الله من حوضی شربة لا یضماء حتی یدخل الجنة و هو شهر اوله رحمة واوسطه مغفرة واخره عتق من النار و من خفف عن مملوکه فیه غفرالله له واعتقه من النار - (البیهقی)

It is reported on the authrity of Salman-al-Farissy, he said: The Prophet of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, addressed us on the last day of Sha'aban. He said:

"O men! the great month is casting its shadow over you, blessed month, a month holding a night better than a thousand months. Allah has made fasting in it an obligatory duty and praying at night, a voluntary option. During its course whoso aequired a good habit is equal to the one who performed an obligatory duty. And whoso performed an obligatory duty is equal to the one who performed seventy obligatory duties. 'This is the month of patienee and the reward of patience

is paradise. And this is a month of fellow-feeling. And during this month the provision of a believer who serves breakfast (Iftar) to a fasting person is increased ; and therein is a remission and forgiveness for his sins and a saving of his soul from the Fire ; and therein is, for him, a recompence, equal to that of the one who fasts, diminshing naught from the recompense of the other."

Salman says : We submitted : 'O Prophet of Allah, none of us finds anything to serve as breakfast (iftar) to a fasting man'. The Prophet of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, said :

"Allah will grant this reward to one who serves breakfast (iftar) to the fasting person a sip of milk, a date or even a draught of water. And one who serves full meal to the fasting person Allah will provide him drink from my *Houze* a *sherbet* so that he will not feel thirsty untill he enters the Paradise.

"This is a month the first part of which is mercy and the middle part of it is forgiveness and the later part of it is deliverance from Fire. And whoso lightens the labour of his servant in the course of this month, Allah will forgive him and save him from the Fire".

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The Month of *Ramadhan* and Prayer

By B. A. RAFIQ

> "O ye who believe prescribed to you is the fast as it was prescribed to those before you that ye may become pious." (2 : 184)

The word *Ramadhan* is derived from the root *Ramdh* which means heat. Fasting is obligatory for all men and women except those who are ill or on a journey. They are required to fast an equal number of days in other months. During fasting one is to abstain from food, drink, smoke and sexual inter course from dawn till sunset.

The object of fasting as described by the Holy Quran is to attain *Taqwa* (Righteousness). The month of *Ramadhan* affords a golden opportunity to give up all evil and undesirable weaknesses and to establish a living and firm communion with God.

One of the special blessings of *Ramadhan* is the efficacy of prayer in this month. The Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement has said "Prayers purifies the heart while Fasting illumines the soul. Purification of heart means freedom from bondage of the inordinate lower propensities, and by the illumination of the soul a believer is blessed with spiritual vision by means of which he realizes God." (Fatawa-i-Ahmadiyya p. 175)

Allah says in the Holy Quran : "And when My servants ask thee about Me say ; 'I am near. I answer the prayer of the supplicant who he prays to Me. So they should hearken to Me and believe in Me, that they may follow the right path.' (2 : 187)

Special attention should be given to Prayers during the month of fasting. In the month of fasting Allah is graciously bounteous in bestowing His blessings on the supplicants.

The Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam says : "Get up in the latter part of the night, perform ablution and offer some supererogatory prayer with sincerity, and then, pray to God with pathos and fervour as follows :

O ! my benefactor, O, my Lord, I am a worthless, sinful and negligent servant of Thine. Thou foundest in me, one

transgression after another, and bestowed upon me one boon after another ; Thou foundest in me sin after sin and conferred on me grace after grace, Thou always overlooked and concealed my faults and shortcomings and bestowed on me Thy innumerable blessings. So, now, too, have mercy upon this worthless and sinful servant, and forgive me my carelessness and ungratefulness, and deliver me of my present distress of mind, for there is no deliverer except Thee. Amen".

Again the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement has said :

"God has made prayer a most potent instrument. God's revelation has repeatedly come to me, 'saying all success Will be achieved through prayers.' Indeed, prayer is our only instrument. We have no other instrument for the achievement of our purpose. Whatever we beg to God in secret, God brings it about and makes it manifest. Most people, however, are not aware of the true significance and the real philosophy of prayer. They do not know how much attention, earnestness, devotion and steadfastness is needed to achieve one's purpose through prayers. In truth, true prayer is to experience a kind of death.

We should, therefore cultivate the habit of prayers, so that each one of us establishes a personal relationship with God. And that in reality is the essance of fasting.

There are certain conditions attached to the acceptance of prayers.

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The first condition which is the most important is that we should never be impatient in prayers. The Holy Prophet has said, "God would accept one's prayers if only one did not show impatience, by saying, I have prayed and I have not been answered" (Muslim).

The Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement says, "God treats His servants like friends. A friend would sometimes accept the request of his friend and would sometimes expect him to accept his will so does God. But even when God seemingly rejects the prayers of a believer He is very often acting in his interests".

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The second condition is that we must have firm belief in the fact that God will accept our prayers.

A saying of the Holy Prophet beautifully explains the philosophy of acceptence of prayers. He is reported to have said, "Every Muslim who prayes to God and whose prayers does not consist in anything which is a sin i.e. anything against God's will or against His commandments, or anything which involves injustice or unkindness to a fellow being will have his prayers accepted. But the acceptance of prayer may take three forms, (a) either God will grant to the supplicant his request in this very life or (b) He will store the thing for him in the next world or (c) He will ward off a like evil from him. (Bukhari)

It is quite clear from this saying of the Holy Prophet that the prayer of a believer is never rejected.

So we must pray to God earnestly and leave its acceptance to God. We do not know what is in store for us in future. He is All-knowing.

The third condition is that we should start and finish our supplications wish *Durood* on the Holy Prophet, because *Durood* on him is always accepted. Moreover *Durood* in itself is a prayer. It is related from the Holy Prophet that once a believer came to him that he had decided to devote a quarter of his prayers for the Holy Prophet. The Holy Prophet praised this man and then said, "It is very good but can't you devote more of your prayers for me?" The believer said, 'O Prophet of God, I promise that from now on I will devote half of my prayers for you'. The Holy Prophet again praised him and observed that if he prayed for the Holy Prophet Allah will grant and accept all his prayers.

The fourth condition is that we must call the appropriate attribute of God while praying. For Example if we want to pray for our health we should call Aim with His attribute *Asshafi* i.e the one who curess our ailments. We must ponder over all the attributes of God.

May Allah give us the strength and the courage to realise the true significance of prayers.

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Glimpses from The Life of Ahmad*

(VI)

The traditions, reproduced below, are taken from the book 'Seeratul Mehdi' by the Late Hazrta Mirza Bashir Ahmad.

English rendering by: Mirza Majeed Ahmad

Readers are requested to send us their comments. (Editor)

1. My maternal uncle Dr. Mir Mohammad Ismail related to me that after taking the oath of allegiance some persons would request Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad for recommendation of some incantation. In reply he usually advised them to exalt their prayers; to supplicate in their mother tounges during the course of their prayers and read the Quran frequently. As far as incantation was concerned he usully advised that one should always ask forgiveness from Allah; recite sura *Fateha* and *Durood Sharif*. Similarly he councelled the recitation of *Lahol* and *Subhanallah*.

He used to say that these were his incantation.

I add that he did not believe in incantation in the manner of a charm; but advised recitation of some sentences in the way of prayers and invocation.

2. Dr. Mir Muhammad Ismail related to me that he administered the oath of allegiance to women only verbally and did not take their hands in his own as he did in the case of men. The Oath was always taken in urdu except in few cases where he administered the oath to peasant men and women in punjabi lauguage.

I state that it is evident from the traditions that the Holy Prophet did not touch the hands of women while administering the oath of allegiance.

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*Continued from the October, 1980, issue of the Review of Religions.

3. Dr. Sayyed Abdul Sattar Shah related to me that once he said in his speech that the reason why the believers have been advised to recite استغفر الله ربی من کل ذنب و اتوب الیه is, that on account of human weaknesses and errors a kind of ذنب which also means tail, which is peculiar to animal kingdom appears on ones person. It is ungaliny and disfiguring to man's beauty. Hence he has been advised to recite استغفار often that he may be spared from this disfigurment and retain his original beauty and grace.

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4. Hafiz Noor Muhammad of Faizullah Chak related to me that some people after taking the oath of allegiance would enquire from him what incantations should they practice. He would advise consistency in the reciting of sura *Alhamdolillah*, *Durood Sharif*, *Istaghfar* and to supplicate regularly. He also laid stress on recitation of اهدنا الصراط المستقیم

5. Dr. Mir Muhammad Ismail related to me that in respect of what is lawful and unlawful in the Law Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was of the view that in *Shariah* (the Law), things are lawful except where one is specifically forbidden or there are cogent reasons for abstention. Rest depends upon the intention of a person انما الاعمال بالنیات . If intention is pure then the deeds receive acceptance from God ; if not then it is unlawful and rejected.

6. Dr. Mir Muhammad Ismail related to me that once a child enquired from him if parrot is lawful meaning thereby if they could shoot parrots for the pot. He replied that it is ; but all animals are not meant for food. God has not created all the animals for food but some are created to add luster and beauty to the surroundings.

I add that once he also told me that all animals are not meant as game ; some are created for beauty.

7. Sethi Ghulam Nabi related to me that he once sought the advice of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad how to concentrate during prayers with eyes open as he was unable to do so. He

advised him to keep them partially closed.

8. Babu Muhammad Usman of Lukhnow stated in his letter to me that he visited Qadian in 1818. As the name of Lala Budha Mall had appeared in many books by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad he wished to see him. He visited him in his shop and enquired how he had found Hazrat Mirza Sahib as he had the oppurtunity of observing him even during his youth. He said that he had never seen the like of him who had such deep love for the Prophet. He also enquired from Lala Budhamal the reason for not accepting his claim. He replied that he he did not wish to enter into it as it needed a lot of explanation.

I state that the names of Lala Malawa Mal and Lala Sharampet appear more often then that of Budhamal in the books of Hazrat Mirza Sahib. On this basis I think that perhaps Babu Sahib was mistaken in the identity of the person and must have met Lala Malawa Mal who is still living (in 1939).

9. Maulvi Muhammad Ibrahim Baqapuri related to me that once he complained about amnesia to the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement. He advised him to recite...رب کل شیئ خادمک. He found it verybeneficial.

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10. Mirza Din Muhammad of Langarwal stated in his letter to me that he had been in close touch with Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad since childhood. He first met him during the life-time of Mirza Ghulam Murtaza. He observed that he used to retire soon after *Isha* prayers, get up for *Tahajjad* prayers at 1 A.M. and recite the Holy Quran till the *Muazin* called for the morning prayers. He used to say his pre-prayers sunnah at home and then go to the mosque and perform the prayers in congregations. He or sometimes Mian Jan Muhammad led the prayers. He used to take a nap after prayers. He was in the habit of saying his pre-prayers sunnah at home and he never saw him perform them in the mosque.

11. Mirza Din Muhammad related to me that whenever

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he slept in the company of the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement he never woke him up for *Tahajjud* but did for the morning prayers. He always woke him by dipping his fingers in water and sprinkling him lightly with it. He once enquired the reason for waking him in such a manner. He replied that so was the practice of the Holy Prophet. He explained that sometime a person may be startled if he was woken up by a sudden noise.

12. Dr. Mir Muhammad Ismail related to me that it was the practice of the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement to consult concerned persons even on small matters. He would consult doctors on medical matters, lawyers on law, scholars on jurisprudence, engineers on construction, family members on household matters and for appropriate use of Urdu words his wife and his father-in-law.

In short he would consult as many people as possible and most of the matters were decided after consulations.

I state that it is clear from the traditions that the Holy Prophet used to consult frequently. Islamic system is based on consultations and once a decision is made then hope for God's grace.

13. Dr. Mir Muhammad Ismail related to me that Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement often said : Beware of the discernment of a true believer as he sees with the light of God.

14. Hafiz Noor Muhammad of Faizullah Chak related to me that once he was among his companions and the talk centered around the Quran. He related the story of a pious man who had distributed all his property. Someone reminded him that he should have left some of it for his children. He replied that he has left Sura Waqia for his son. He added that it is stated in the traditions regarding the blessings of the Holy Quran that one who regularly recites Sura Waqia God saves him from hunger.

15. Hafiz Noor Muhammad of Faizullah Chak related

to me that it was probably the second or the third Annual gathering of the Community that the Founder of the Movement came to say his *Isha* prayers in the mosque. He informed Moulvi Sahib that the verse و الذين جاهدوا had flashed in his mind. He explained it in such depth that the audience started weeping bitterly. Later Maulvi Abdul Karim led the prayers with recitation from Sura Mirriam. Even during the prayers people were crying uncontrolably. Such scene was seldom repeated. The second day he delivered a speech in which he said that prayers possesses such force that if some one claims that it moves the mountain he would believe it ; that the trees change places he would not deny it either. Muslims have no weapon axcept the weapon of prayers. It lifts man to God.

16. Dr. Mir Muhammad Ismail related to me that there were certain outstanding triats in the character of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. One was that he did not hurt the feelings of others in any way. He avoided it to the extreme and advised others to shun it.

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17. Hafiz Nabi Bux related to me that he consulted Hazrat Maulana Noor-ud-Din about his fast declining eyesight. He was of the opinion that the condition indicated probably the oncoming of cataract. He consulted two more doctors and they too expressed the same opinion. He felt extremly disturbed and related this to the Founder of the Movement. He recited *Alhumdlillah* and passed his hand on his eyes and said that he would pray for him.

After this incident the dreaded cataract never matured and he did not suffer any impairment of the eyesight. His eyesight functioned normaly.

18 My mother related to me that once Mirza Nizam Din (a cousin of the Founder of the Movement and his arch enemy) ran very high temprature which affected his brain. There was no doctor or Hakim present in Qadian. His relatives informed the Founder of the Movement how went immediately to see him. He advised

a freshly salughtered fowl to be placed on his head. This relieved the fever.

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19. Munshi Zafar Ahmad of Kapurthala related to me that once a gentleman came to Qadian in the company of Maulvi Muhammad Ahsan. He was hard of hearing and used an improvised amplifire in the shape of a funnel. He requested the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement for prayers. He replied that he would pray and that nothing was beyond God. God was merciful to him and he heard the speech of the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement without any artificial aid. He jumped up with joy and broke the funnel through which he could formerly barely hear if one shouted.

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